Australian Bureau of Statistics

6220.0 - Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, Sep 2003

ARCHIVED ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 17/03/2004

MEDIA RELEASE

March 17, 2004 Embargoed: 11:30 AM (AEST) 43/2004

3.9 Million people not in the labour force

There were 3.9 million people aged 15 to 69 years who were not in the labour force (i.e. neither employed, nor unemployed) in September 2003, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

These people made up 28% of Australia's civilian population aged 15-69 years, a proportion which has remained steady over the last few years. Of people not in the labour force, almost a third (31%) wanted to work and almost two-thirds (64%) were women.

There were 834,600 people with marginal attachment to the labour force (see media note). Most of these (775,500 or 93%) were not actively looking for work, but were available to start work within four weeks. The remainder were actively looking but were not available to start work at the time of the survey.

Other characteristics of people with marginal attachment to the labour force include:

- 68% of women and 46% of men had a preference for part-time work;
- the main reasons for not actively looking for work, reported by men, were 'attending an educational institution' (33%) and 'own ill health or physical disability (19%)
- for women, the main reasons for not actively looking for work were 'childcare' (30%) and 'attending an educational institution' (16%)
- 79,800 or 10% were classed as discouraged job seekers because they gave labour market related reasons for not actively looking for work. The main reasons given were 'considered too young or too old by employers' (33% of discouraged job seekers), 'no jobs in locality or line of work' (27%), and 'lacked necessary schooling, training, skills or experience' (23%).

Over three-quarters (78%) of the 3.9 million people not in the labour force were without marginal attachment to the labour force. Of these, just under 10% or 378,400 people wanted to work, but were neither actively looking nor available to start within four weeks.

Further information is in **Persons not in the Labour Force, Australia, September 2003** (cat. no. 6220.0).

Media Note: People are defined as **marginally attached** to the labour force if they want to work, and are either not actively looking for work but are available to start work within four weeks, or are actively looking for work but are not available to start in the survey reference week.

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